

Strategic Human Resource Management

Managers at all levels – from the executive to front-line supervisors – are responsible for effectively managing their workforce. Agencies use their human resources, along with their financial resources, work processes, and relationships with stakeholders, to deliver efficient, cost-effective services to the public. Strategic Human Resource Management is the approach to managing the state's workforce to provide the highest levels of management, accountability, and performance.

The Results of Strategic Human Resource Management

Strategic Human Resource Management will:

- Align employees with agency missions to achieve the greatest public benefit.
- Value employees with fairness, dignity, and respect.
- Ensure high-performance government that responds to changing public needs.
- Support the Governor's directive on Government Management, Accountability, and Performance (GMAP).

The **vision** is simple:

Best workforce. Best place to work.

Building a Performance-Based Culture

The Governor has charged us with changing the culture of state government. Strategic Human Resource Management is the tool set we have to create that change. We can create a culture where...

- State employees perform at their best and know that their efforts are contributing to the mission of their agency;
- Managers are held accountable for producing the best results at the best cost; and
- Citizens receive true value for their investment in state government.

Roles and Responsibilities

Ultimately it is managers at all levels who bear responsibility for managing the state's workforce. It is managers who "do" the work of human resource management. The state's Human Resource community is a resource for agency executives and managers in carrying out their responsibilities. As a partner with managers, Human Resources can:

- Deliver and enhance operational processes.
- Identify human resource practices that make organization mission and strategy happen.
- Manage organizational and personal transformation and change.
- Develop employee competence, capability, and commitment.

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Human Resource community in Washington state government encompasses a number of resources available to assist agency directors, executives, and managers. Your agency Human Resource Manager plays the central role in advising you and your management team on workforce issues and processes. The Department of Personnel, Labor Relations Office, and the Labor and Personnel Division of the Attorney General's Office are important support resources to agency executives and human resource professionals.

Questions to Ask

- Do our managers know what specifically is changing as of July 1, 2005, and how to ensure those changes happen smoothly?
- Are our managers ready to communicate those changes to their employees before July 1, 2005, and what is the plan to do so?
- Are any of the changes going to impact our business operations? In what way?
- Is our management team clear about how to communicate with the union on labor issues and how that relationship has changed? Do they understand the state's new union/management relationship? How do you know?
- Do our personnel and payroll staff clearly understand the changes and are they ready to answer employee, supervisor and manager questions related to the changes?

Plan and Align Human Resources

Do employees in your agency understand their roles? Do they know your expectations and how you will hold them accountable? Do you know the competencies your agency requires in order to meet your objectives and to deliver service to the public? Does your agency possess these competencies? Do you have a plan in place to obtain, maintain, and develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities that you need?

The successful execution of agency strategy requires a people strategy that addresses how the agency will operate, what is acceptable behavior, and how human resource results will be measured. Effective human resource planning and alignment promote a clear linkage between the Priorities of Government and the agency mission and strategic plan through to the performance expectations of agency managers and employees.

The Plan and Align Human Resources process determines what kind of workforce the agency wants based on its mission, priorities and strategic plan. It considers how the agency intends to acquire and retain desired talent and defines the organization structure that will align all employees with agency objectives and performance expectations.

Outcomes

Human resource planning and alignment result in two direct outcomes:

- Workforce structure and human resource strategies and policies are aligned with the agency's strategic plan and resources.
- People understand the agency's cultural framework and the responsibilities for management of human resources.

Over time, effective human resource planning and alignment create a human resource management foundation that will build and sustain a productive, high performing workforce.

Opportunities and Issues

- Personnel reform provides the opportunity for agency leadership to step back and plan strategically about how to use human resources to achieve strategic objectives.
- Multiple layers of change must be planned and managed to ensure the agency has a workforce plan and human resource policies that support the agency mission.
- Personnel reform focuses on the competencies that are required for each individual position.
 - Competencies create a shared set of expectations among managers and employees of the attributes needed for success in a job.
 - Competencies (or "skills and abilities" in the collective bargaining agreements) play a critical role in recruiting, performance management, and employee development.

- Changes in the state's classification system give managers greater flexibility to make changes in employee duties and responsibilities in response to changing business needs.

Questions to Ask

- Have all policies required by the personnel system rules been drafted and approved?
- What are the core competencies expected of all managers and staff in the agency?
- Which of our programs will face a reduction in staffing levels, which will experience an increase, and where do we anticipate retirements? What plans do we have in place to meet the agency's staffing needs for the coming year?
- Has the agency developed a formal workforce plan? When was it last reviewed and updated?
- What is the agency's process for identifying the competencies (non-represented) and skills and abilities (represented) that are required for agency positions? Do we have a process in place for ensuring position descriptions are up to date and managers are basing hiring and performance related decisions on clearly documented criteria?

Supporting Resources

Agency leadership and the agency Human Resources function have responsibility for Human Resource Planning and Aligning.

- Department of Personnel Client Service Managers can assist with human resource strategy formulation and policy development.
- Department of Personnel also maintains master service agreements with external consultants in strategic human resource planning who can work with agencies to assure that organizational human resources are aligned to the mission and goals of the organization and administration.
- The Department of Personnel Assessment Team provides consultation and assistance to agencies in identifying the competency requirements of agency positions. DOP has defined typical competencies for high-priority job classifications.

Hire the Workforce

Is your agency able to recruit and hire the best talent for each position? Are new hires given the support they need to be successful? Is their initial performance monitored to ensure they're a good fit for the position?

Achieving agency priorities requires people with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities. Effective hiring is the foundation for building a high performance workforce that supports the agency's mission and implements its strategic plans.

The Hire the Workforce process ensures that the agency has the right number of people with the right skills in the right place at the right time. This process includes the activities that attract, select, and hire the best people possible, and continues with the initial orientation and evaluation of new staff.

Outcomes

The activities of workforce hiring result in two direct outcomes:

- The best qualified candidates are hired.
- New hires are reviewed during their appointment period.

Over time, effective workforce hiring results in having the right people in the right jobs.

Opportunities and Issues

- Personnel reform decentralizes recruitment and hiring processes and gives agencies more flexibility to meet agency needs. Recruitment and selection are based on the agency needs for a specific position (rather than general requirements defined for a broad job classification).
- Hiring managers have a broader pool of candidates to consider.
 - Previously limited to seven
 - Now 20 for represented positions
 - Without limit for non-represented
- Non-permanent appointments are longer and more flexible.
- Managers may, in many cases, extend a probationary period.
- For non-represented positions, additional compensation options may be available for recruitment and retention.

Questions to Ask

- What challenges do we have in recruiting the best talent for our positions? What are we doing to address those challenges?
- What policies and processes do we have in place to ensure equitable and defensible hiring practices? Do these policies meet the requirements of the civil service rules and collective bargaining agreements?

- What are we doing to prepare the agency to meet the new demands of position based recruiting? Have we assessed the capacity of our staff to conduct position-based recruiting and assessment? Do managers understand the new processes and expectations? Have we determined what portions of the process we will handle at the agency vs. the areas where we will rely on DOP?
- Are we dealing with any hot issues surrounding hiring activities, such as lawsuits or appeals?
- Do our managers have the knowledge and skills to effectively recruit and screen candidates? If not, what are we doing to build that capacity? What support does the human resources office provide to managers?
- Are managers held accountable for their hiring decisions? How?

Supporting Resources

The agency Human Resource function works with the Department of Personnel in most hiring situations. Line supervisors and managers play a critical role in defining job needs and selecting from the candidate pool.

- The Department of Personnel, the Labor Relations Office, and the Labor and Personnel Division of the Attorney General's Office offer consultation on a full range of recruitment, assessment, and hiring issues.
- The Department of Personnel offers customized recruitment and assessment services to meet your specific needs. Executive search services are available on a fee-for-service basis.
- You may use DOP's on-line recruitment, application, and screening processes for all or some of your hiring needs.

Deploy the Workforce

How are employee skills matched to work requirements? How does your agency form effective teams to work on strategic initiatives? Do employees regularly receive feedback from their managers? What is the morale of agency employees?

Successful execution of agency strategy requires people who have the right knowledge, skills, and abilities to achieve the desired results. The effective agency uses all of its people, all of their skills, all of the time. It provides a safe work environment with a culture that is constructive and that respects the rights of both management and employees.

The Deploy the Workforce process ensures that agency work is performed by capable people. Through deployment activities, management matches employee skills to work requirements, communicates agency objectives, forms effective teams, maintains positive employee relations, and sets individual goals. Managers coach employees and provide feedback on completion of work assignments.

Outcomes

The activities of workforce deployment result in two direct outcomes:

- Employees know what is expected and how they are doing on an ongoing basis.
- The workplace provides the capacity in which employees can perform, is safe, and fosters effective work relations.

Over time, effective deployment means that employees have the day-to-day support needed to perform their work successfully.

Opportunities and Issues

- The law in effect prior to July 1, 2005, requires agency heads to bargain over working conditions for which they had discretion. New law limits bargaining to be with the Governor's Office. Agencies and unions will discuss issues and follow the contract to implement management decisions. This means fewer reasons to bargain with the unions and more flexibility for agency heads to take action.
- Employee rights to return to prior positions have changed.
 - For both represented and non-represented employees, the agency has greater ability to determine the specific return rights of an employee leaving for a temporary position. This can reduce the potential disruptions that may result when employees return to the agency.
- New layoff provisions provide agencies with some greater flexibility.
 - For non-represented employees, agencies may exclude a position as an option for employees who have been laid off in order to minimize the impact of a layoff on a critical business initiative. The agency must provide for this in its layoff

policy, and this applies only to positions that meet legitimate business requirements.

- Also for non-represented employees, employers only need to offer laid-off employees those positions for which the employee satisfies both competency and position requirements.
- For represented employees, agencies will determine which positions to reduce by using the skills and abilities (competencies) and then seniority, and need only offer positions to laid-off employees who have the skills and abilities needed for the position.

Questions to Ask

- What is our average rate of turnover? Do we have programs or functions that experience greater turnover than others? What are we doing to reduce turnover in key program areas?
- What process do we have in place for setting and communicating employee expectations and measuring results?
- How do we measure employee commitment, and what steps are we taking to support employees during this transition?
- What is the status of our labor-management relations?
- Do we have the policies and procedures in place to manage a reduction in force?

Supporting Resources

Line management has the primary responsibility for workforce deployment, while the agency Human Resources function typically plays a key support role.

- The Rules Office in the Department of Personnel assists with interpretations of personnel rules.
- The Labor Relations Office assists with interpreting the Master Agreements and in working with the unions.
- Labor and Personnel Division staff and attorneys in the Attorney General's Office offer consultation, legal advice, and representation for personnel actions.
- DOP's Employee Assistance Program provides assessment and referral services for all types of personal problems; helps access needed services from employee's selected health care provider; conducts supervisor consultations on how to work effectively with troubled employees; and provides Substance Abuse Professional services under the USDOT alcohol and drug testing regulations.

Develop the Workforce

What opportunities does your agency provide employees to develop their skills? Do employees seek out opportunities to learn? Is your agency's workforce capable of responding to today's demands—and those of the future? Does your agency encourage employees to advance in their careers—and provide opportunities to do so?

The Develop the Workforce process focuses on continuous improvement in individual and agency skills. Job-related training and development prepares employees for new ways to grow and support the agency's objectives.

Employee development plays a key role in expanding talent to meet current and future work requirements and build the next generation of the state's workforce. Workforce development can help employees improve their performance. It also provides employees the opportunity to clarify their career plans and acquire the training and developmental experiences to fulfill them.

Outcomes

The activities of workforce development create an environment where employees are engaged in developmental opportunities and seek to learn. Over time, effective development results in employees who have the competencies needed to be successful in their present positions and for advancement in their careers.

Opportunities and Issues

- Current agency practices for training and development remain in place, and requirements for employees and new supervisors remain the same.
- Training plans and courses will be linked to competencies.
- Statewide leadership competencies have been identified and will form the basis of revisions in the existing management and leadership development programs.

Questions to Ask

- Have managers and HR staff who need training to implement personnel system changes been trained? If not, what is the plan to ensure they are prepared? What challenges are there to ensuring this happens?
- What will the changes mean for future development of staff and managers? Is there a plan to re-align training and development programs to meet new needs?
- Does the management team understand the core competencies for leadership? Are there opportunities for further management training and development?
- How much training does the agency provide employees? What sort of regular training programs are in place?
- Do we know whether employees have the critical skills needed for their positions? Do we have a process to assess employee capabilities against skill requirements? Do

employees and their managers develop and execute regular learning plans to build their skills?

Supporting Resources

Line supervisors and managers and employees have the primary responsibility for workforce development. The Human Resource or Training function within the agency generally leads in designing and offering training programs that meet specific agency needs.

- Department of Personnel offers classroom training on a wide variety of topics of broad interest and application.
- The DOP Organization Development Program can provide facilitation, organizational consulting, and specialty experts through a network of consultants with master service agreements in place with the state.
- The Career Services Program assists staff with career changes as a result of a lay-off. It offers a wide array of services and resources to assist state employees with career development and transitions.

Reinforce Workforce Performance

Do employees receive regular evaluations that hold them accountable for their performance? Do agency reward systems encourage outstanding performance? Does the agency's culture encourage managers to eliminate poor performance, or does it tolerate it?

Reinforcing performance and addressing performance deficiencies play a key role in motivating employees to meet or exceed goals. Formal performance evaluations promote individual accountability, but should not displace frequent feedback and coaching.

The Reinforce Workforce Performance process is the focal point of employee performance management. Reinforcing workforce performance means recognizing and maintaining the desired results and taking actions that will retain the best performers. It also means addressing unacceptable performance through employee development or, where necessary, discipline and termination. The essence of performance management is accountability—both on the part of employees and of managers.

Outcomes

The activities of reinforcing workforce performance result in two direct outcomes:

- Employees clearly know how their performance contributes to the success of the agency.
- Managers reward successful performance and eliminate poor performance.

Over time, effective reinforcement of performance differentiates and strengthens successful performance and holds employees accountable.

Opportunities and Issues

- New process for performance assessments, linked to agency strategic plan and position competencies.
- New reward options for non-represented and WMS employees.
- Just cause standard for all.
- New grievance and/or appeal rights for employees.

Questions to Ask

- Do agency managers understand the principles of performance management?
- Does the agency have a process for performance management? Are managers held accountable for their responsibilities in this process?
- Do supervisors and managers conduct regular performance assessments?
- Does the performance management process result in individual employee development plans? Career plans?
- Is there a succession plan for key and leadership positions in the agency?

Supporting Resources

Line managers have the primary responsibility for reinforcing workforce performance. Agency leadership is responsible for building a performance-based culture. The agency Human Resource function may design and administer performance evaluation processes.

- Department of Personnel Client Service Managers provide assessment and consultation services on performance management principles and processes.
- The Department of Personnel offers courses in performance management, giving feedback, and handling difficult interactions that can enhance manager skills in conducting performance evaluations and dealing with employee performance issues.